

The Story of Longinus.

WHEN our Divine Lord expired upon the cross for the salvation of men, one of the Roman soldiers who stood around, wishing to be satisfied that the Redeemer was indeed dead, pierced His sacred side with a lance. The Gospel does not record the name of this soldier, but, according to tradition, he was called Longinus. It is said that he was afflicted with shortsightedness, almost to the verge of blindness, but after his cruel lance thrust some drops of the precious blood which gushed from the sacred wound sprinkled his brow and flowed down upon his eyelids. Immediately his sight became clear and strong, and at the same time, by this holy baptism, his soul was transformed and he recognized in the Divine Victim of Calvary Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Having been commanded to guard the tomb of the Savior after His burial, he was one of the witnesses of the resurrection, and related it to the chief priests and doctors of the law. Vainly they tried to bribe him to give false testimony, as they had done to his companions. He refused with indignation, and boldly proclaimed in the city of Jerusalem the resurrection of the Lord. When the term of his military service had expired, writes "E. de M." in "The Crusaders' Almanac," Longinus quitted the army and retired to the neighborhood of Capadocia, where he published far and near the wonderful miracle it had been his privilege to witness. Twenty or thirty years passed away. Persecution assailed the infant Church, and the Governor of the province, knowing that Longinus was a Christian, sent soldiers to arrest the man of God. Near Sebaste they overtook a man who was journeying the same way.

"Is it not in this province that Longinus dwells?" they asked. "He was formerly a captain in the Roman army, but is now a follower of Christ, and devotes himself to spreading the superstitions of the Christians."

"He dwells in this country," was the reply. "What do you want with him?"